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ABSTRACT

This monograph examines the special problems of students with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD) who are from culturally diverse backgrounds and offers strategies for designing appropriate interventions. In the introductory chapter, the student demographics in the E/BD category of special education are reviewed and efforts of one state, Alabama, to correct the problem of disproportionate representation, is discussed. The next chapter identifies the three essential components of school success related to students with E/BD and their families: appropriate student behavior, effective academic instruction, and a responsive school environment. Academic and behavioral classroom strategies that exemplify best practices for culturally and linguistically diverse children with E/BD are then considered. The last chapter explores tactics to increase the participation of families in the education of their children. It stresses understanding parental involvement and the barriers affecting urban parental involvement and offers recommendations for increasing the involvement of urban parents. (Contains 33 references.) (DB)

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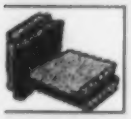

From the Fourth CCBD Mini-Library Series: Addressing the Diverse Needs of Children and Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Programs That Work

Strategies and Procedures for Designing Proactive Interventions with a Culturally Diverse Population of Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders and Their Families/Caregivers

Gloria D. Campbell-Whatley
Ralph Gardner, III

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The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, *Publisher*

About the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

CCBD is an international and professional organization committed to promoting and facilitating the education and general welfare of children and youth with behavioral and emotional disorders. CCBD, whose members include educators, parents, mental health personnel, and a variety of other professionals, actively pursues quality educational services and program alternatives for persons with behavioral disorders, advocates for the needs of such children and youth, emphasizes research and professional growth as vehicles for better understanding behavioral disorders, and provides professional support for persons who are involved with and serve children and youth with behavioral disorders.

In advocating for the professionals in the field of behavioral disorders, CCBD (a division of The Council for Exceptional Children) endorses the Standards for Professional Practice and Code of Ethics adopted by the Delegate Assembly of The Council for Exceptional Children in 1983.

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Foreword

In schools across the country, we are witnessing significant demographic changes in the student population. Data show that there is an increasing number of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in both general and special education. The long-standing debate over what is special about special education has been rekindled as school personnel struggle to ensure that a heterogeneous population of students receives high-quality instruction. The challenges are many and varied. Concerns about misidentification may have surpassed those of underidentification—especially when we simultaneously look at the numbers that relate to diversity and disability. Diversity is an issue not only in regard to overrepresentation and underrepresentation of students in various disability groups, but also in regard to the delivery of high-quality instruction. There are those who would argue that a limited body of empirical research poorly informs current teacher preparation and classroom practices. Others assert that students who are variously labeled as *emotionally disturbed, behaviorally handicapped,* or *emotionally or behaviorally disordered* are especially susceptible to inappropriate placement and ineffective practices. It is difficult to refute these assertions.

Most education professionals recognize that we must view these challenges as opportunities as well. We must forthrightly address the complex issues surrounding cultural competency, parent involvement in education, high-quality academic and nonacademic intervention, and the judicious use of emergent technology. We also recognize that we cannot afford to ignore the special challenges of serving students with emotional or behavioral disorders placed in

interim alternative educational settings or correctional facilities. Rapidly changing social, philosophical, political, and economic forces compel us to examine current policies and practices critically and to repudiate any that do not serve all our students well.

The following books comprise the Fourth CCBD Mini-Library Series: Addressing the Diverse Needs of Children and Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Programs That Work, which derived from the 2001 international conference sponsored by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders:

- *Addressing the Issue of Disproportionate Representation: Identification and Assessment of Culturally Diverse Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders* by Festus Obiakor, Bob Algozzine, Martha Thurlow, Nomsa Gwalla-Ogisi, Stephen Enwefa, Regina Enwefa, and Angela McIntosh
- *The Challenges of Gangs and Youth Violence in the Schools* by Sharon H. Grant and Richard Van Acker
- *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners with Behavioral Disorders* by Gwendolyn Cartledge, Kai Yung (Brian) Tam, Scott A. Loe, Antoinette H. Miranda, Michael Charles Lambert, Cathy D. Kea, and Evette Simmons-Reed
- *Dealing with Behaviors Perceived as Unacceptable in Schools: The Interim Alternative Educational Setting Solution* by Reece L. Peterson and Carl R. Smith
- *Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice: Recommended Practices* by Robert B. Rutherford, Mary Magee Quinn, Peter E. Leone, Lili Garfinkle, and C. Michael Nelson
- *Integrating Technology in Program Development for Children and Youth with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders,* edited by Lynn K. Wilder and Sharon Black
- *Strategies and Procedures for Designing Proactive Interventions with a Culturally Diverse Population of Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders and Their Families/Caregivers* by Gloria D. Campbell-Whatley and Ralph Gardener, III

As series editors, we solicited members of the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders from across the country to share their thoughts on a range of critical issues regarding students with emotional or behavioral disorders. We are indebted to our colleagues who have so generously given both their time and expertise to making this mini-library possible. We trust that their efforts will contribute to your success and the success of the students with whom you work.

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1 Introduction

Children with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) present special challenges to educators. By definition, these students chronically engage in behavior that differs significantly from that of their peers (Kauffman, 2001). In addition, children with E/BD often perform poorly academically and drop out of school at disproportionately high rates (Chesapeake Institute, 1994). Two-thirds fail state competency tests, and, as a group, they have the lowest grade point average of any special education category (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Chronic student misconduct, poor academic instruction, and a culturally unresponsive school environment together pose major challenges in providing high-quality programs for these children.

The burgeoning number of school-age children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds has significantly increased the need for educators to be culturally responsive to the children they serve. The accurate identification of students for special education is especially critical. Given the current disproportionate representation of children from diverse backgrounds, accurate identification and labeling of children in special education has become a controversial issue (Artiles & Zamora-Dura, 1997).

Too often, the rhetoric about the disproportionate representation of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in special education (especially in programs for students with E/BD) is contentious and emotional. Discussion of the disproportionate rep-

resentation of these students often involves fingerpointing and accusations on the part of stakeholders (i.e., teachers, administrators, parents, and community advocates). Although strong feelings surrounding this issue are understandable, they do not always serve the students well.

In this chapter, we examine the student demographics in the E/BD category of special education and discuss one state's attempt to correct the problem of disproportionate representation. We highlight the three essential components of school success related to students with E/BD and their families: appropriate student behavior, effective academic instruction, and a responsive school environment. We present academic and behavioral classroom strategies that exemplify best practice for culturally and linguistically diverse children with E/BD. Finally, we explore tactics to increase the participation of urban families in the education of their children.

Identification and Placement

The number of students from diverse backgrounds is increasing in both the general education and special education populations. Within the last 10 years, the rate of increase for students in special education has been 6% for European Americans, as compared to 53% for Hispanic Americans, 13.2% for African Americans, and 107.8% for Asian Americans and other ethnic groups (U.S. Department of Education 20th Annual Report to Congress on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1998). Comparatively, culturally and linguistically diverse children are both under- and overrepresented in special education classrooms (Artiles & Zamora-Dura, 1997). That is, culturally diverse students are more likely to be underrepresented in classrooms for gifted students (Office of Civil Rights, 1994). However, culturally diverse students are more likely to be overrepresented in classrooms for children with mild mental retardation and E/BD. Nationally, children from specific diverse cultures are both over- and underrepresented in E/BD classrooms (Bauer & Shea, 1999) (see Table 1).

Table 1
Under- and Overrepresentation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in E/BD Programs

Ethnicity	*% General Population*	*% E/BD Population*	*Under/Over Represented*
Asian American	3	1	Underrepresented
Hispanic American	12	6	Underrepresented
Euro Americans	68	21	Underrepresented
African American	12	22	Overrepresented

Children with E/BD comprise 9% of the special education population and about .08% of the general population. Of the special education population, children with E/BD from diverse backgrounds represent 35%. African-American students are particularly at risk for placement in E/BD classes. While African-American students make up about 12% of the general school population, they constitute about 22% of the children given the E/BD label. Thus, educators and parents are understandably concerned about developing procedures and safeguards to address the phenomenon of overrepresentation of children from diverse backgrounds in E/BD classrooms.

One factor that may contribute to the overrepresentation of these children could be a mismatch between the students and the educational system. Teacher referral remains the primary source of information for the initial identification of students with E/BD. It follows that both preservice and inservice programs must better equip teachers to work with children from diverse backgrounds. A critical aspect of better equipping teachers is providing opportunities for teachers-in-training to experience various cultures and learn to be culturally responsive to students with diverse needs. Culturally responsive teachers should be better able to distinguish between student behavior that is simply a manifestation of cultural differences and behavior patterns that warrant evaluation for special education placement.

The Alabama Plan

Nationwide, the issue of overrepresentation is being addressed in various ways. For example, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Alabama State Department of Education recently signed a consent decree to address the overrepresentation of students from diverse backgrounds in special education (Alabama State Department of Education, 2000). The decree has resulted in state initiatives that will help Alabama to appropriately identify and provide effective programs for students with E/BD. The initiatives focus on the following:

- The development of prereferral teams.
- Awareness training to address the overrepresentation issues and educate professionals regarding the disability areas of emotional disturbances, mental retardation, and specific learning disabilities.
- The development of positive behavioral interventions and support teams to address student classroom behavior (Sugai, 2000).
- The development of training in the use of effective instructional strategies (Ellis, 2000).
- The development of programs to assist beginning teachers in the area of special education.
- The development of diversity training to assist professionals in understanding cultural differences.

Alabama is in the first year of implementation of the 5-year decree. Data will be maintained and reviewed annually to determine the effectiveness of these initiatives in addressing Alabama's major challenges.

2 Improving Outcomes for Children with E/BD

What can teachers do to improve outcomes for students with E/BD? First, teachers must maintain a positive attitude despite the challenges that children with E/BD and their families pose. Second, teachers must develop a comprehensive program that includes effective classroom management and academic instruction that is culturally responsive to student needs.

Maintaining a Positive Attitude

Notwithstanding the myriad challenges, we must remain focused on the task of providing the best possible education to each and every student. The following are some fundamental principles that successful teachers can follow in creating a positive learning environment:

- Realize that the child's behavior problems are not a personal attack but a manifestation of his or her disability.
- Collect data on both social and academic goals on a daily basis. Daily collection of data allows the teacher to more closely monitor the progress of the student and make the appropriate changes in the program in a timely manner.

- Establish a consistent and stable learning environment in which all children can be successful. A classroom routine that meets the needs of the students will greatly reduce stress on the teacher and the students.
- Ensure that communications are clear and demonstrate respect for the child. The teacher should model how to communicate with others in a respectful manner.
- Plan instructional activities that include a variety of teaching strategies so that they meet the instructional needs of diverse learners.
- Seek to maintain a balanced life by having activities and hobbies away from the classroom that allow for rest and stress reduction.

Classroom Management

When developing a comprehensive learning classroom for students with E/BD, a culturally responsive environment is essential. The classroom management system should foster safety and promote the acceptance of differences, orderliness, and cooperation among students. Positively focused classroom management systems allow teachers to manage the behavior of students in a manner that maximizes success. The Premack Principle, having students complete less reinforcing activities prior to engaging in more reinforcing activities, should be incorporated into the classroom schedule. The principle allows the teacher to have natural contingencies in place as part of the daily routine (e,g., students complete math assignments prior to recess time).

Rules

Rules and expectations are an important component of all classrooms. Clear rules allow persons in the classroom to work more effectively and efficiently. Classrooms without rules (or with ineffective rules) create an unpredictable environment in which children may act out to discover the limits on their behavior. Rules are

not effective simply because they are well written or because students participated in developing them. Rules are effective only when the teacher and the students have the same understanding of each rule and both behave within the boundaries of the rules. Directly teaching classroom rules (e.g., communicating in a respectful manner, demonstrating patience, valuing other's property) and procedures (e.g., how to use the learning center, computer, and reading area) is essential.

Classroom rules that are few in number, clearly and positively stated, and visible are conducive to an effective management system. Rules should be explicitly taught by means of teacher modeling and student role play that includes multiple examples of both appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Rules should be posted in a high-visibility location to allow the teacher the opportunity to refer to rules when children comply with (or violate) them.

Acknowledging classroom rules can make potentially difficult teacher–pupil (or pupil–pupil) interactions less personal and individually charged. The less personal the interaction, the more likely it is that the student will accept the corrective feedback appropriately. Teachers should make the rules an important component of the classroom culture by using the same words as are found in the posted rules when correcting or praising student performance. The consequences for a student demonstrating appropriate or inappropriate behavior should be as close to the occurrence of the behavior as possible. Consequences that are close in time and context to the actual rule-related behavior allow the student to learn appropriate behavior more quickly. In some cases, it may be necessary to reinstruct or reinforce particular students in specific aspects of classroom behavior.

Teacher Attention

Another characteristic of successful classroom management is active student academic engagement. Teachers must work to keep students actively engaged in appropriate academic tasks. The benefits of keeping students constructively engaged are not new; grandmothers have long said that "idle minds are the devil's workshop."

Teachers who work with students with E/BD know that an unstructured period of 5 minutes or less can seem like an eternity as the student behavior deteriorates into a succession of less-than-desirable actions.

One potentially difficult time is when teachers are engaged in teaching one student or a small group with the expectation that the other students will complete seatwork independently. Independent seatwork should always consist of instructional activities that are designed specifically to reinforce previously mastered skills. Even when this standard is in place, students may still need teacher assistance to complete seatwork assignments accurately. Teachers should have a system that allows students to signal for assistance while continuing to work on other assignments until the teacher can assist them. For example, students can write their names on the blackboard and then return to their seat and complete other academic assignments. This strategy reduces the amount of unproductive time and limits the frustration students often encounter when they sit at their desks unnoticed with their hands raised for long periods of time. Students who quickly return to their work after signaling for assistance should be positively reinforced for making a good choice.

In all, effective teachers work hard to maintain high rates of student active engagement in relevant instruction. To maintain students' interest in academic tasks, teachers should use a variety of instructional activities (e.g., computer-assisted instruction, peer tutoring, learning centers, cooperative learning) and offer students some opportunity to choose from among various instructional activities.

Academic Instruction

Academic achievement is the most widely accepted standard measure of school success—even for students with E/BD. Although students with E/BD often perform below their capabilities due to behavior problems, another reason is the lack of emphasis on academics in some E/BD classrooms. Sometimes teachers are so intent

on maintaining classroom order that academic instruction is relegated to a second-class status. However, the reality is that social and academic behaviors are intricately intertwined (Cartledge & Milburn, 1996). Effective pedagogy is as important in working with students who have E/BD as with any other student population. Positive classroom conduct and social behavior are essential to academic success; an accumulated body of research clearly shows that student academic engagement and correct responses promote appropriate classroom behavior. Academic instruction should be designed to systematically move the student through a series of instructional objectives toward his or her annual goals.

Effective instruction is not only systematic, but also sensitive to children's cultural differences. Culturally responsive instruction uses information the student already knows to teach what he or she needs to learn—for example, using items that are familiar to a culturally or linguistically diverse student to teach a math skill, as illustrated by the following math word problem:

> Milik's mother has sent him to the store to purchase food for dinner. He is to buy 3 pounds of chicken, Jamaican Jerk sauce, 4 pounds of turnip greens, and a loaf of bread. Chicken is on sale for $.99 a pound, Jamaican Jerk sauce cost $1.69, turnip greens are $.70 a pound, and a loaf of bread cost $1.29. How much will Milik spend at the store?

Often, the language used in math problems is confusing for students from diverse cultures because it is not a part of their everyday experiences. The result is that sometimes students are unable to answer questions correctly, not because they do not know the math operations, but because the language of the problem poses a barrier to them. Using culturally sensitive language allows students to concentrate on the academic skill rather than spend time trying to decode majority culture information that is superfluous to the academic task. Another way to incorporate cultural diversity into the classroom instruction is through the use of novels that reflect the diversity represented in the country. By including information that reflects the students' culture, teachers convey the message that their culture is valued and respected.

Culturally responsive instruction is an important element but not the only characteristic of sound pedagogy. Instruction should be delivered at a brisk pace that promotes student active engagement. In addition, instruction should be designed so that the students are required to make frequent responses and have high rates of success. Finally, students should receive frequent feedback on their performance as close to the actual occurrence of the behavior as possible (Gardner, Heward, & Grossi, 1994). Some examples of instructional tactics that have these characteristics are response cards, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning groups.

Response Cards

Response cards are reusable cards (e.g., white laminated board) or signs that allow all the students in a class to respond simultaneously. There are two types of response cards: preprinted and write-on. Preprinted response cards allow students to select a response from a predetermined list of potential answers to teacher questions. Write-on response cards allow students to write one- to three-word responses on blank cards. Students erase their responses between questions. Both types of response cards promote high rates of student participation, maintain high rates of accurate responding, and demonstrate improved academic achievement for learners. Response cards also allow the teacher to monitor students' behavior and provide immediate feedback on their responses. Readers will find a comprehensive discussion of response cards in Heward and colleagues (1996).

Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is another effective strategy to increase student participation and academic achievement. An underused strategy in most classes, peer tutoring casts students in the role of teachers. Effectively used, peer tutoring allows all students to be simultaneously engaged in tutoring dyads (Miller, Barbetta, & Heron, 1994). Effective peer tutoring instruction includes frequent assessment to ensure high-quality instruction. To ensure quality instruction, students are systematically and directly taught the following components of tutorial instruction:

- How to present instructional stimuli.
- How to give social praise for a peer's correct responses.
- How to deliver appropriate corrective feedback.
- How to assess tutee performance.

In addition to the academic benefits, there is ample evidence that there are positive social benefits for both tutors and tutees (e.g., Osguthorpe & Scruggs, 1986).

Cooperative Learning

As with peer tutoring, use of cooperative learning necessitates that teachers choose the structure carefully and systematically teach student roles and responsibilities. Cooperative learning allows teachers to group-individualize academic *and* nonacademic expectations by means of group goals and individual accountability (Slavin, 1991). In introducing cooperative learning, teachers must establish clear goals, choose carefully from among various procedures for students to assist each other, teach students how to use the procedures, and devise an evaluation plan to determine the effectiveness of the instruction.

Behavior Management

A positive classroom environment is not complete without a system for teachers to reinforce appropriate behavior and provide consequences for inappropriate behavior. In some cases, conducting a functional behavioral assessment allows the teacher and/or individualized education program (IEP) team to develop a more effective and efficient behavioral intervention plan. Student-specific interventions are designed to decrease inappropriate behaviors; teach alternative, more appropriate behaviors; and provide students the opportunity to perform to their best ability academically.

In the past, teachers were taught to view the student as the problem and focus on changing the student's behavior. In stressing the

importance of proactive behavior management, Lewis and Sugai (1999) proposed a multidimensional model of effective behavior support (EBS) that addresses the total school climate and home–school relations, as well as the student's individual behavior. Positive behavioral supports and functional assessments provide a rationale as to why the behavior occurs and a way to identify its function (or the purpose) it serves for the individual student. These two concepts provide a framework for helping students to change aberrant behaviors. Within this system, school personnel teach appropriate behaviors and make explicit the behavioral expectations. Instead of simply describing these expectations to students, teachers demonstrate repeatedly the specific actions that constitute the desired behaviors and have the students practice those behaviors. Teachers systematically replace inappropriate behaviors with alternative behaviors that serve the same function (or result in the same outcome) for the student but are more socially acceptable or appropriate to others.

The following is a portion of a behavior plan for an African-American student classified as having a learning disability (LD) as the primary disability and E/BD as a secondary disability. The plan illustrates appropriate use of the school climate and home–school relations while assisting the child with positive behavioral supports.

Case Study

Sample Behavior Plan

Jamarcus is a 10-year-old, fourth-grade African-American boy identified as having a learning disability and emotional disturbance. He receives direct LD services and indirect E/BD services. He has an active IEP that includes a behavior plan. Although he previously received LD services for 2 years, he began receiving E/BD services a year ago, after the death of his father. His mother reports that her husband died of suicide and that the effect on Jamarcus has been negative. Both mother and son receive professional counseling. His

mother reports that since the death of his father, Jamarcus seeks more attention at home and likes her to read to him or sit and watch various television shows. He enjoys playing outside alone.

Jamarcus demonstrates deficits in language arts and reading, although his reading skills are improving. His cognitive functioning and listening skills are average. His full-scale intelligence quotient (IQ) is 93, his reading standard score is 76, and his math standard score is 98.

Jamarcus's mother reports that he has peers or aides to assist him with reading material in the classroom. He has little difficulty completing his work in the general education classroom without assistance; therefore, the supportive instructional arrangement has proven to be appropriate.

Jamarcus's mother reports that he is having difficulty with his behavior in two areas, acting out and completing assignments correctly. When entering the special education classroom, Jamarcus attempts to make the class laugh by telling stories and jokes or making wisecracks about his classmates. Some children laugh, while others become upset. Jamarcus's behavior interrupts the flow of the class. After about 10 or 15 minutes of this behavior, he seems to calm down and focus on his academic assignment.

Jamarcus's special education teacher has attempted to address his behavior by using a reward when he finishes an assignment. Presently, the teacher is attempting to get Jamarcus to read by himself and be less dependent on tutors or helpers. Although he has reading skills, Jamarcus has been resistant to using them. Because reading is a tedious task, he becomes frustrated easily and rushes to complete his assignments, which results in a significant number of incorrect responses.

The specific behavior plan for Jamarcus will include the use of direct observation and measures of permanent products (i.e., written classroom assignments). Jamarcus's mother will be included in the reward system.

Targeted Responses

- Increase Jamarcus's time-on-task behavior.
- Increase the number of items Jamarcus completes correctly on a given assignment in language arts.
- Redirect and use Jamarcus's "cracking" (i.e., attention seeking) behavior as an incentive.

Objectives

- Given a 15-minute language arts assignment in the special education classroom, Jamarcus will complete the assignment with 85% accuracy.
- Given 10 minutes to redo an assignment, Jamarcus will complete the assignment correctly with 85% accuracy.
- Given a 15-minute language arts assignment in the general education classroom, Jamarcus will complete the assignment with 85% accuracy.

Steps

- A baseline of four assignments will be collected and evaluated to determine the average number of errors Jamarcus makes on his assignments. Errors will be charted on an equal interval graph.
- The behavior plan will be implemented. Jamarcus is to complete each assignment using a timer placed on his desk. Jamarcus will be instructed to complete the assignment in 15 minutes. The assignment must be adjusted to reflect expectations that are within his independent level of academic performance. He must use his independent reading skills to complete the assignment. The reward system needs to be explained to Jamarcus.
- Jamarcus will present the check-sheet (see Figure 1) to the special education teacher, the general education teacher, and his mother on a daily basis. The teachers will collaborate to postively reinforce Jamarcus for assignments completed. Jamarcus will be provided check marks, which he can use to purchase various incentives each day. He can receive these rewards at school in the special education class or at home.

Figure 1. Behavior Check-Sheet

Behavior Addressed	*Yes*	*No*	*Comments*
Special Education Class			
Completed assignments			
Completed assignments correctly			
Completed assignments without assistance			
Regular Education Class			
Social Studies			
Completed assignment with assistance			
Completed assignment without assistance			
Mathematics			
Completed assignment with assistance			
Completed assignment without assistance			
Science			
Completed assignment with assistance			
Completed assignment without assistance			
TOTAL			

- Since Jamarcus likes and needs attention, he can purchase class time to present a teacher-approved comedy act. At home, his mother can use TV time, selected reading time, and outside play as incentives. The list of activities that Jamarcus likes at school and at home can be adjusted. Points may need to be adjusted periodically; they should be paired with and gradually faded out and replaced with social reinforcement.

- After the plan is implemented, Jamarcus's performance on the assignments should be routinely assessed.
- The plan will be adjusted if his performance does not reflect the desired outcomes (i.e., increases and decreases in targeted behavior).
- Individualized instruction to address academic and nonacademic deficits will be provided as needed.

3 Parent Participation

Students with E/BD and their teachers are not the only persons who must be involved fully in the educational process. Teachers must also work to establish relationships with the children's families. This is not only a legal mandate (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]), but also a critical factor in making long-term positive changes in children's behavior. A family can be defined as a set of interdependent and independent persons who share common background experiences, goals, resources, and commitments to one another over time (Hilderbrand, Phence, Gray & Hines, 2000). Most people determine the reality or meaning of family through their own experiences. Accordingly, most definitions are related to the family in which we grew up. Many culturally diverse students with E/BD are from low-income urban families, while the majority of their teachers are from white middle class families.

To increase parental participation in their children's education, it is necessary to be familiar with the culture of the family. That is, it is important to understand the community, the history, gender roles, and prominent values as we move from "blaming the parent" to forging a collaborative relationship. Why are many parents —especially parents from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds— reluctant to participate in school activities? Parents often feel alienated from schools and see little opportunity to be included in their children's education. Sometimes, parents lack the knowledge and ability to work effectively with school faculty, whom they may view as unapproachable (Decker, Gregg, & Decker 1996; Epstein, 1995).

Many times, the home culture varies significantly from the school culture. Nevertheless, teachers must strive to create a comfortable environment if they wish to increase parental participation. A partnership among home, school, and community members to support the child's educational process is essential (Perroncel, 1993). The first step to achieving this goal is to gain a better understanding of the parents.

Understanding Parental Involvement

There are different ways for parents to participate in their children's education—from reading to them at home to assisting in the classroom or sitting on advisory councils at school. Parent participation can also consist of providing services such as tutoring, fundraising, or participating in field trips (Finders & Lewis, 1994). Whatever the participation, when parents are involved in on-site programs, schools have a greater opportunity to reaffirm and achieve wider societal goals. It is important for teachers to recognize that parents may have different skills and differing levels of comfort and accept parents on whatever level they are able to participate in their children's education.

Why Parent Involvement Is Important

Parental representation is a significant factor in obtaining positive outcomes in urban schools (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1997). There is substantial evidence to show that children whose parents are involved in their schooling have:

- Significantly higher academic achievement and cognitive development.
- Improved parent–child relationships.
- An increased frequency of parent participation in their activities.
- An increase in appropriate school behavior.
- A decreased number of suspensions (Frazier, 1997).

Increased parental involvement leads to predicted high achievement and appropriate behavior on the part of students of all races and incomes.

Achievement and Behavior

The bulk of each child's education, counseling, health care, and values is derived from the family (Deans, 1994). Parents are the child's first teachers and play an integral role in developing the child's orientation toward both academic achievement and social behavior (Slaughter & Epps, 1987). Family involvement helps to improve educational outcomes such as grades, test scores, attendance, and behavior (Clark, 1983). When families are involved, children:

- Earn higher grades.
- Receive higher scores on tests.
- Complete more homework.
- Attend school more regularly.
- Demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviors.
- Graduate from high school at higher rates.
- Are more likely to enroll in higher education.

Barriers Affecting Urban Parental Involvement

Family Structure

By all accounts, the so-called traditional family structure has undergone significant transformation in the United States. In recent years, we have witnessed an increase in single-parent families, especially in urban settings (Lippman, Burns, & McArthur, 1996). This phenomenon has resulted from the increasing number of divorces, separations, and unwed and teenage parents. Today, fewer school-aged children come from two-parent families (Swick & Graves, 1993). The majority of low-income urban children live in single-parent, female-headed households (Lippman et al., 1996).

Students with E/BD are at an even higher risk if they come from this difficult family situation.

Socioeconomic Status

Many teachers believe that parents with low incomes do not value education and have little to contribute to the education of their children (Davies, 1988). In addition, many educators believe that poverty leads to deficiencies in acquiring academic skills. Although many students still achieve regardless of family income, single-parent homes, or two-parent homes, the reality is that poverty has some debilitating effects that educators cannot ignore.

Parent's Schedule

Many school professionals fail to involve parents and blame their inability to do so on the lack of interest and commitment on the part of parents. These attitudes contribute to some parents' feelings of alienation, especially when they are rarely given an opportunity to participate in their child's academic life.

Educational Level

Parents may be uncomfortable because of their level of schooling. Inner-city parents with low income and educational levels and single parents are less satisfied with their opportunities for parental involvement than are parents who have attended college and have higher incomes (Rioux & Berla, 1993). Many parents, aware of the disparity between themselves and the school staff, choose to stay away. Accordingly, teachers have to reach out to parents and demonstrate a real concern for their children.

Expectations of Administrators and Teachers

Teachers' attitudes contribute to the amount of parental involvement that exists within the classroom and/or school building. Parental involvement depends on how school administrators and teachers seek to engage parents in schooling (Hollifield, 1995). Teachers who have low expectations or believe that parents do not care about their children and do not want to be involved in their education may contribute directly to a lack of parental involvement and, in turn, children's failure (Lintos, 1992). Although urban inner-

city families may exhibit lower levels of involvement than do other families, they still maintain high expectations for their children. Educators can play an important role by assisting parents in learning how to provide their children with the appropriate experiences needed for future success. For example, teachers can provide information to parents on how to provide a consistent study time for their children or how to advocate more effectively for their children.

Recommendations for Increasing the Involvement of Urban Parents

1. Establish rapport with parents.
   a. Interact with parents about positive situations. Ask parents about their interest in school.
   b. Do not judge or criticize parents.
   c. Treat parents with respect.
2. Provide increased opportunity for parental involvement.
   a. Urge parents and/or guardians to remain or become active in their child's educational process.
   b. Be flexible with meeting times.
   c. Make sure that each child is properly educated and attends school regularly.
   d. Ask parents who attend meetings to spread the word to other parents and ask those parents to do the same.
3. Establish successful parent/school programs.
   a. Follow the lead of Head Start and Chapter 1 programs insofar as these programs interact positively with parents.
   b. Use parents as teaching partners, decision-makers, and advocates.
4. Develop a case history of the family and determine factors that are hindering their involvement (Kunjufu, 1989).

Conclusion 4

In schools across the country, the education of culturally and linguistically diverse children with E/BD poses a major challenge. In response to that challenge, we must work to improve our teacher preparation programs and to ensure more opportunities for teachers to develop skills in working with students from diverse cultures. Teachers trained to be sensitive to culturally and linguistically diverse students and families should be better prepared to identify and serve children with E/BD. Additionally, initiatives need to be put in place in each state to address the issue of minority overrepresentation. Beyond being culturally sensitive, education personnel must have a repertoire of skills that will allow then to both instruct and manage student social behavior skillfully.

Educators should begin development of a responsive learning environment through the development of positive attitudes and structured classrooms. A setting that nurtures diverse children includes academic and behavioral methodologies that are empirically supported. School environments should promote high levels of active student responding and socially responsible behavior. Both academic and nonacademic skills should be a part of the curriculum and instructed directly by the teacher. Teachers should have a plan that is not only tailored to the student's individual needs, but also includes school climate and home relations.

In addition to implementing appropriate academic and behavioral strategies, teachers must work hard to actively engage parents in the educational process. This is important not simply because IDEA mandates that schools seek parental involvement, but also because

of the benefits parental involvement creates for the student, the teacher, and the family. Children whose parents are involved in the educational process do significantly better both academically and socially. Parent and teacher collaboration allows the teacher the opportunity to influence what happens in the home and vice versa. Parental school involvement also gives parents the opportunity to develop important communication and support skills that can have long-term positive ramifications for their children.

In closing, we must keep in mind that the culturally and linguistically diverse child's success depends on a combination of factors, including academic instruction, classroom management, culturally responsive environments, and parental involvement, to name a few. Teachers play pivital roles in orchestrating that success. Finally, our work is far from complete; we must continue to search for methodologies that better address the needs of the diverse population of learners with E/BD and their families.

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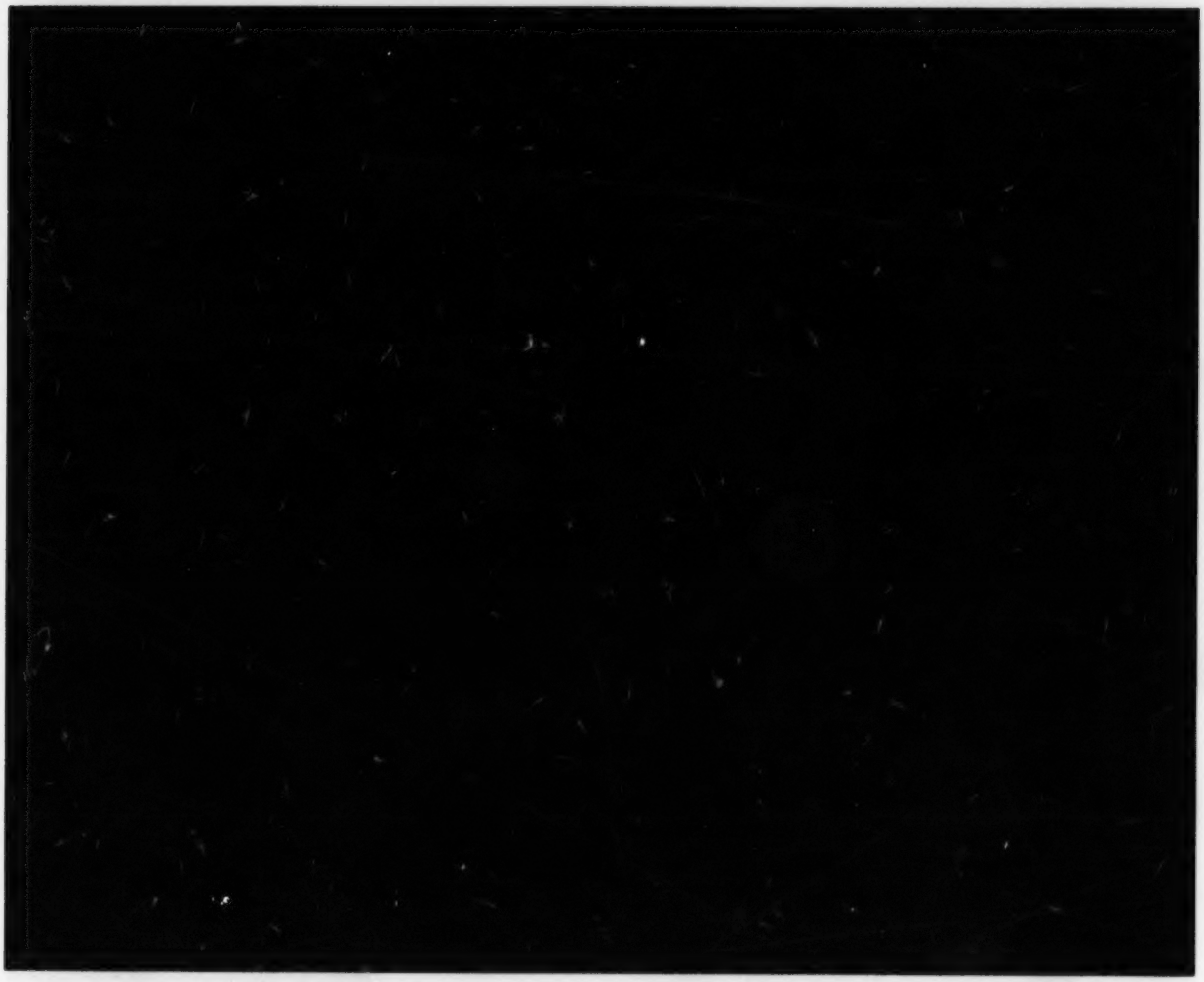

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